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“Talking Frankly” about David Irving

A Critical Analysis of David Irving's Statement on the Holocaust

By Hadding Scott

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The Rumbula Massacre (1:57:45 – 2:01:38)

David Irving’s mention of his bizarre theory that the Holocaust happened but without Hitler’s will or knowledge serves as a segué into discussion of the putative Rumbula Massacre (which Irving never calls by that name). The Rumbula Massacre is supposed to have been a mass-shooting, a few kilometers from Riga, of most of the Jews from the Riga ghetto. In early accounts the dates vary, but Irving takes 30 November as the date for the story that he tells.

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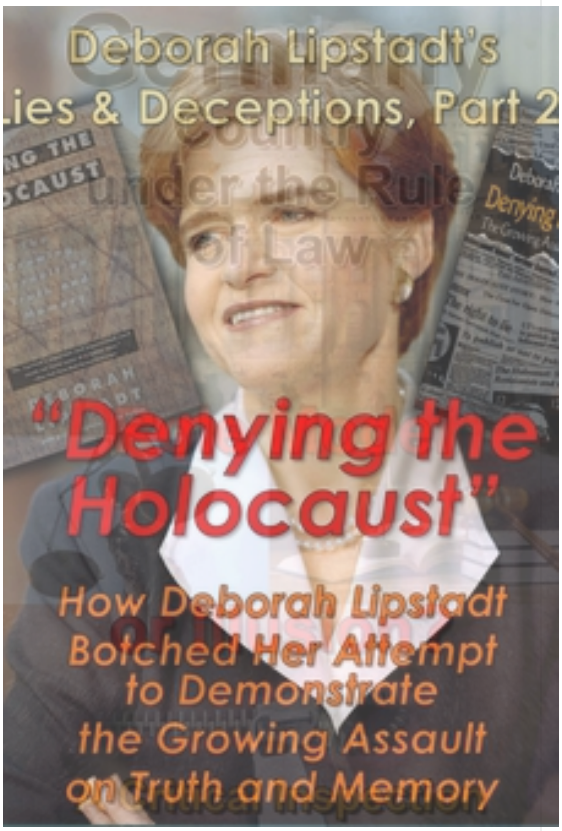
Deborah Lipstadt's
Lies & Deceptions, Part 2
"Denying the Holocaust"
How Deborah Lipstadt Botched Her Attempt to Demonstrate the Growing Assault on Truth and Memory

The Lies and Deceptions of Deborah Lipstadt

Deborah Lipstadt's claim to fame is her 1993 book *Denying the Holocaust* and the events it triggered. This video exposes her book as a collection of lies and deceptions.

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The whole story of the Rumbula Massacre is doubtful, but so far little skeptical attention has been focused on it. Thomas Kues, who did write an article about it a few years ago, stated that "the Rumbula incidents … have hitherto received no attention from revisionist historians" (T. Kues, in *Inconvenient History*, Vol. 4, No. 4, 2012).

The relative lack of critical attention focused on this episode makes the Rumbula Massacre a convenient retreat for David Irving in his flight from Holocaust Revisionism.

* * *

Irving claims, without citing any source, that on 30 November 1941 Himmler suggested to Hitler that a trainload of Jews sent from Berlin to Riga be simply killed, since there was no place to house them. Hitler supposedly replies, "Out of the question." Irving alleges that Himmler then had to reverse a plan that had already been set in motion, and phoned Reinhard Heydrich to tell him to cancel the killing of those Berlin Jews.

That is the context that Irving supplies for interpreting Himmler's handwritten notes from a telephone conversation with Heydrich:

> *"Judentransport aus Berlin.*
> *Keine Liquidierung."*

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These notes seem to have been written by Himmler strictly as mnemonics for himself, and not to communicate anything to others. For that reason, they are extremely laconic and their meaning is not necessarily clear to anyone other than Himmler.

However: there are, before those two lines that David Irving likes to quote, two other lines. Lucy Dawidowicz takes all four lines together as a single coherent note:

> *"Verhaftung Dr. Jekelius*
> *Angebl*[ich] *Sohn Molotows.*
> *Judentransport aus Berlin.*
> *keine Liquidierung."*

Dawidowicz understands this to mean that Dr. Jekelius, alleged to be the son of Molotov, is to be arrested, but not killed – unlike, she assumes, the rest of the transport. (Incidentally, Dawidowicz also says that the *Judentransport* is headed for Prague – where Heydrich is – and not Riga.) (L. Dawidowicz, *The Holocaust and the Historians*, p.38)

The premise of Dawidowicz's interpretation is that all four sentence-fragments together form a coherent message, but this is doubtful.

In the first line, Dr. (Erwin) Jekelius is the name of a well known German medical doctor whom Paula Hitler was forbidden by her brother to marry, and who could not remotely be imagined to be the son of Molotov. It would be quite amazing if a putative son of Molotov also happened somehow to have the surname of this German physician. Therefore I conclude that the first and second lines, at least, do not

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represent parts of a coherent whole.

David Irving does not go as far as Dawidowicz in trying to unify all four sentence-fragments, but he does assume without justification that the act of *Liquidierung* in the last line has as its object the *Judentransport* in the penultimate line. There is no reason to assume this.

Furthermore, *Liquidierung* does not have to mean killing. A very common expression is: *Liquidierung des Ghettos* – which does not mean killing everyone in the ghetto, but merely relocating them. Himmler’s note could refer to a ghetto that was not to be dissolved at that time. Arthur Butz has suggested that it was the train itself that was not to be liquidated (A. Butz, 5 September 2008). David Irving’s interpretation of Himmler’s jottings is in any case highly doubtful.

It is also an interesting question, if Himmler wanted to countermand an imminent action in Riga, why he would have phoned Heydrich in Prague about it. It seems that he should instead have contacted Friedrich Jeckeln in Riga directly, given the urgent nature of the message. The paradox is all the more glaring, given that Himmler and Jeckeln were in direct communication already; Jeckeln had in fact contacted Himmler directly that morning. It is absurd to suppose, as Irving would have us suppose, that Himmler tried to stop what Jeckeln was doing that day in Riga by going through Heydrich in Prague. But there is that note from Himmler’s conversation with Heydrich that can be given a sinister connotation, and so Irving wants to work it into the story somehow.

There is also a chronological problem with the drama that Irving wants to construct around Himmler's notes. Irving assumes that the telephone-call to Heydrich (at 1:30PM) resulted from an exchange between Himmler and Hitler, but, as Butz points out, the telephone-conversation happened before Himmler's meeting (2:30-4:00PM) with Hitler that day.

There is no genuine evidence in this "Talking Frankly" video for Irving's story that Himmler suggested to Hitler killing a thousand Berlin Jews and then tried to stop Jeckeln in Riga from doing it – much less that those thousand Berlin Jews were machinegunned, as Irving says, "along with 4000 local Jews from Riga" before the countermand was received.

* * *

Lacking good evidence, Irving uses innuendo to generate the belief that those Jews were machinegunned.

Irving refers to the fact that Jeckeln, in his urgent request to Himmler on the morning of 30 November 1941 for more Suomi submachineguns, uses the word *Sonderaktionen*. Irving tells us that *Sonderaktionen* means "killing operations," but this is not at all evident. It is clear, in fact, that a *Sonderaktion* does not have to involve killing anyone.

It can designate a mass-arrest. When 184 members of the Jagiellonian University of Krakow were arrested on 6 November 1939, the mass-arrest went by the codename *Sonderaktion Krakau*. In that *Sonderaktion*, nobody was killed. Jeckeln's *Sonderaktionen*, if they were like the one in Krakow, involved

rounding up suspected or anticipated troublemakers for preventive detention.

Irving also tries to make the request for submachineguns itself seem sinister. He inaccurately calls them tommyguns to evoke the cinematic association of that word with gangsters:

> *“You know, like James Cagney, you know, in the movies: tommyguns with the drum-magazines. And the Suomi magazine tommygun was ideal for the killing-operations.”* (1:58:58 – 1:59:07)

Department of Defense (USMC) Photo 13628
During a lull in the fight, a Marine machine gunner takes a break for coffee, with his sub-machine gun on his knee and his .30-caliber light machine gun in position.

U.S. marine with his sub-machine gun

David Irving may be unaware that anyone other than criminals ever used the Thompson submachinegun. The FBI used them, and even United States Marines.

The utility of submachineguns for *Sonderaktionen*, meaning mass-arrests, is clear. The weapon's firepower offers a great intimidation-factor for keeping a recalcitrant crowd under control. The bullet from a submachinegun, issuing from a pistol-cartridge, has low range and relatively little penetrating power, which is desirable in an urban environment, to minimize the danger of killing innocent bystanders.

* * *

Irving creates the false impression that Himmler referred specifically to the killing of those Berlin Jews:

> *"Himmler says, 'The operation you carried out in Riga grossly violates the guidelines laid down by me and Heydrich. Any such further excesses will be ruthlessly punished. You are to report to headquarters.'*
>
> *"He's referring to the killing of the Berlin Jews and the local Jews."* (1:59:14-28)

There is no document that Irving cites that really says this. Irving is misrepresenting.

In addition to attributing fictitious statements to Himmler, Irving has misstated the date of the message. Irving says that Himmler's message to Jeckeln about guidelines was sent on 30 November 1941, but in fact it was sent on 1 December. Mark Weber confirms that the relevant message was sent on 1 December, and comments on Irving's use of it as follows:

> *"Particularly noteworthy was a Dec. 1, 1941, order by Heinrich Himmler that, Irving said, apparently was issued following a stern rebuke by Hitler because of an unauthorized mass shooting of Jews the day before near Riga, Latvia, including several hundred Jews who had just arrived by train from Germany."* (M. Weber, *JHR*, September/December 2001)

Irving moves the message forward to 30 November, the same day as the alleged shooting, probably to make it seem more urgent. If it was sent the day after the alleged shooting then it seems less urgent. In fact it was not an urgent message. It does not even say, as Irving alleges, that Jeckeln did anything wrong. It says nothing about any operation carried out in Riga. Not a word.

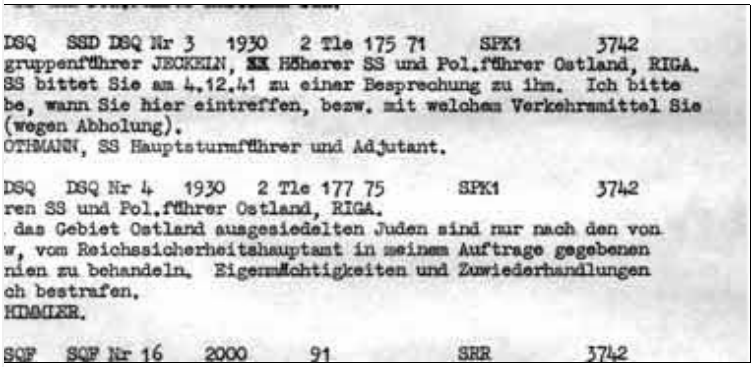
Also, Himmler does not say that he *will* punish anyone. He says that he *would* punish (*würde ich bestrafen*). The use of the imperfect subjunctive implies that no act requiring punishment has yet occurred, or in any case that Himmler himself is not presently intent on punishing anyone.

> *"25: OEJ from DSQ SSD DSQ No 4 1930 2 parts 177 75 SPK1 3742*
>
> *To Senior SS and Police Commander, Ostland* [Baltic Provinces], *RIGA* [SS Obergruppenführer JECKELN].
> *The Jews resettled in the Ostland region are to be treated only in accordance with the guidelines laid down by myself or by the Reich Security Main Office. I would punish*

> *those who act on their own authority or in contravention .*
> *(Sgd. H HIMMLER)"*

Note Weber's indulgent words: "Irving said, apparently." What it really means is that the "stern rebuke by Hitler" is something that Irving invented to create an interesting story. The fact that the "stern rebuke" is a product of speculation is evident from how Irving presents it in *Hitler's War*:

> *"Somebody – and this can only have been Hitler himself – had reprimanded Himmler..."* (D. Irving, *Hitler's War* (web edit), p. 456)



DSQ SSD DSQ Nr 3 1930 2 Tle 175 71 SPK1 3742
gruppenführer JECKELN, ~~XX~~ Höherer SS und Pol.führer Ostland, RIGA.
SS bittet Sie am 4.12.41 zu einer Besprechung zu ihm. Ich bitte
be, wann Sie hier eintreffen, bezw. mit welchem Verkehrsmittel Sie
(wegen Abholung).
OTHMANN, SS Hauptsturmführer und Adjutant.

DSQ DSQ Nr 4 1930 2 Tle 177 75 SPK1 3742
ren SS und Pol.führer Ostland, RIGA.
das Gebiet Ostland ausgesiedelten Juden sind nur nach den von
w, vom Reichssicherheitshauptamt in meinem Auftrage gegebenen
nien zu behandeln. Eigenmächtigkeiten und Zuwiederhandlungen
ch bestrafen.
HIMMLER.

SQF SQF Nr 16 2000 91 SRR 3742

The Himmler Telegram

Irving does not really know that this happened. It is a product of imagination.

Incidentally, David Irving told the same story to the court during his libel-suit in 2000. Irving told the court that Himmler's message to Jeckeln said "explicitly" something that it does not say at all:

> *"But we know from the late 1941 police decodes ... precisely what orders had gone*

> *from Hitler's headquarters, radioed by Himmler himself, to the mass murderer* SS Obergruppenführer *Friedrich Jeckeln, stating explicitly that these killings exceeded the authority that he, Himmler, himself had given, and by the* Reichssicherheitshauptamt...." ("David Irving's Final Address in the London Libel Trial," *JHR*, March/April 2000)

If he would say it in court then perhaps Irving believes his own imaginings.

Since we know that German personnel under Hitler's government who mistreated Jews on their own initiative were punished, it is inconceivable that Jeckeln could have conducted the alleged Rumbula Massacre and gone without being punished. Jeckeln did confess to crimes in a show-trial put on by the Soviet Union in 1946, but obviously this is no indication of what really happened.

* * *

To add the appearance of substance to his account of the Rumbula Massacre, Irving cites the statement tortured out of Walter Bruns, a prisoner of the London Cage who, according to CSDIC's document, is supposed to have been an eyewitness to the massacre.

An important indication of the untrustworthiness of this statement is that Bruns told a substantially different story when put on trial: at Nuremberg, Bruns testified that he had not witnessed the shooting himself; rather he had heard an oral report about it from two subordinate officers that he was (strangely) unable to identify. (G. Fleming, *Hitler and the*

Final Solution, 1987, p.83)

Irving however, without mentioning this discrepancy, emphasizes the premise that Bruns himself had witnessed the shooting, which obviously makes the story seem more credible:

> *"In fact on that very day, November the 30th, there is a German army colonel who hears what's happening to the Jews, outside the town, and he's lost all his Jews that day, and he's wondering where his Jewish workers have gone. The local SS guy says, 'Well if you want to know what's happening to your Jewish friends, you'd better drive out of town down the road to Dueneberg, to Dvinsk, about eight kilometers and you'll see what's happening to your lovely Jews.*
>
> *"And the colonel, he describes in April 1945 to a prisoner in a British prison-camp, here, near here in Latimer, and he says, 'So I drove down the road, and there was this open field, and three, two or three pits had been dug out, and truckloads of Jews were being driven up and made to lie down in the pits, sardine-fashion, and they were being machine-gunned to death by these men standing on the rim.*
>
> *"And the fellow prisoner says, 'But Herr General' – because he's a general now – 'Herr General, what were the gunners saying? Were they saying anything when they were doing this?'*

> *'Oh, yes, all these coarse remarks, these coarse shouts going around. I remember one of them shouting, 'Look at that one. Look at that beauty.' And I can see her in my mind's eye now, a beautiful girl in a flame-red dress.*
>
> *"And that's that day, November the 30th, 1941.*
>
> *"And he says, 'We discussed it among ourselves, army-officers. Somebody had to tell the Fuehrer, Adolf Hitler, what was going on. None of us wanted to be the one. So we sent for a leftenant and told him to come out later that day, see what was going on and write a report. And we sent his report up to Hitler's headquarters.' And that evening the order came that this kind of shooting had to stop immediately, forthwith. From Hitler's headquarters."* (2:00:02 – 2:01:32)

First: does it make any sense that Jews needed by the German army for work were being taken away by the SS and killed? Not a bit.

The account of the Germans' behaving like licentious and undisciplined thugs (as conveyed through the description of their banter) is typical war-propaganda, but of course not an accurate representation of how German personnel really did behave. Bruns' actual statement goes farther in this direction than Irving lets on, alleging that "at Riga they first slept with them [Jewish women] and then shot them to prevent them from talking." This is really over the top. It is inconceivable that it

could have become a common occurrence and common knowledge that SS-men or police under the SS were sleeping with Jewish women and then killing them at their own discretion. They would not have lasted long.

David Irving's version of Bruns' account has Hitler being informed by some *Wehrmacht* officers of what happened, yet there are no negative consequences, neither for Friedrich Jeckeln nor for Heinrich Himmler. If Irving is going to endorse the story of the Rumbula Massacre, including Walter Bruns' confession, then he is going to have to say that Hitler knew that it happened but punished nobody.

David Irving chooses not to mention that Bruns' account says that Hitler ordered the Rumbula Massacre. Bruns even says (conveniently) that the written order was shown to him. The purpose of making Bruns tell this story, then, was not only to confirm a story of German atrocities but to pin the blame on Hitler. But you would not know this from Irving's presentation because he leaves it out.

Bruns' narrative undermines itself with its own surreality. It says that the Jews "stood in a queue 1½ kilometers long which approached step by step – a queueing up for death." Certainly, this is over the top. Obviously, Jews in such numbers, under such circumstances, would not have stayed in a queue. No wonder that Irving, trying to preserve Bruns' credibility, decided to leave it out.

There is also a discrepancy between Bruns' account of the victims' being machinegunned (by which I understand automatic fire), and other accounts which say that the "Jeckeln

system” of mass-shooting was accomplished with a single bullet to the neck. The latter seems to be the prevalent version of the story.

Another problem is that there is no record of any order “from Hitler’s headquarters,” that this kind of shooting had to stop. The claim that an order from Hitler’s headquarters arrived on the evening of the Rumbula Massacre, prohibiting that kind of shooting, is David Irving’s invention. What Bruns’ crazy narrative says is that “a fortnight later” an order from Hitler came “prohibiting shootings on that scale” and instructing that shootings of Jews be “carried out more discreetly.”

Thus, anyone who cites David Irving as an authority for the claim that Hitler protected the Jews is being set up for an embarrassment, insofar as Irving’s own pretended source says something different. And that is, unfortunately, true of many of David Irving's little stories.

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